

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR**



March 3, 2011

Steven E. Sher
Director of Zoning and Land Use Services
Holland & Knight LLP
2099 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. - Suite 100
Washington D.C. 20006

Re: 515 20th Street, N.W., Square 122, Lot 25, Calculation of Gross Floor Area

Dear Mr. Sher:

This is to confirm the substance of our discussion on Monday, January 24, 2011, concerning the Courtyard Marriott hotel proposed to be developed on the property located at 515 20th Street, N.W., known as Lot 25 in Square 122. The property is zoned SP-2 and the Board of Zoning Adjustment approved the construction of the hotel in Order No. 17443.

I and others in my office had previously met with representatives of the owner to review how the gross floor area (GFA) for the building would be computed and to determine which areas within the building could be excluded from GFA and therefore not charged against the maximum permitted floor area ratio. We arrived at our conclusions in part based on the explanation of what is and is not included in GFA from a 1990 memorandum prepared by a former Zoning Administrator. Since the Zoning Regulations in this regard have not changed since that time, the memorandum remains a pertinent explanation of how to compute GFA and the principles set forth in the memorandum continue to be applied by this office in reviewing plans for building permits.

The memorandum indicates that "ramps on the ground floor leading to a parking garage on a lower level" are excluded from GFA. There is such a ramp located within the north side of the building entering from 20th Street. The ramp slopes down at a shallow grade from the point where it enters the private property within the building and then slopes down at a steeper grade beginning about twenty-five feet into the building. In the computations which resulted from the earlier meeting, an area of 1,470 square feet was excluded from the parking ramp but an area of 331 square feet at the top of the ramp closest to the street was not excluded. Based on the way that this office has applied the Regulations, that additional 331 square feet should not be included in GFA.

With a land area of 13,312 square feet, at 6.0 FAR, the maximum permitted GFA is 79,872 square feet. The previous calculations resulted in a total GFA in the building of 79,283 square feet, or 589 square feet less than permitted. With the additional 331 square feet excluded from the parking ramp, the GFA resulting is 920 square feet less than the maximum permitted. The plans approved by the BZA showed a proposed GFA of 79,872 square feet.

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You advised that the owner proposes to add 920 square feet of GFA back into the building in two ways:

- Adding one room at the northeast corner of each of the 7th and 8th floors at the rear of the building over the 6th floor in an area where the 7th and 8th floors are presently notched back; and
- Expanding a meeting room at the southeast corner of the building on the first floor at the rear.

In total, these three areas would not exceed 920 square feet of GFA.

This proposed additional area would not require any additional areas of relief from the BZA. The BZA imposed no conditions on the grant of the approval. The number of required parking spaces would still be provided. The expansion of the first floor to the rear of the building would not intrude into the required rear yard, since §534.3(b) provides that the rear yard need not be provided below a plane twenty feet above the mean finished grade at the rear, and the meeting room would not extend above that plane. The additional space is all at the rear of the building, either not visible from the street at all (the meeting room) or on top of areas already proposed to be constructed (the two additional guest rooms).

Accordingly, I hereby confirm that you may exclude from GFA the entire parking ramp on the first floor of the building, including the 331 feet closest to the street but still within the building. Further, you may add back into the building a total of 920 square feet, as described above, so as to bring the proposed GFA up the maximum of 79,872 square feet allowed. I will approve the plans as described above for zoning purposes. You must meet all the requirements of other codes and regulations.

Please let me know if I may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Matthew Le Grant
Zoning Administrator